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Stories

— in —

Rhyme

— by —

“Uncle Ho”

H o m e r P. B r a n c h

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“Uncle Ho”

Homer P. Branch



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20

Cowboy Jack's Story, as he Told it to The Scout

Had a fight last night with the Injuns?
Well,

'Twas a savage night to be out,
And the rain was as heavy as ever fell—
Say! ain't you a gover'ment scout?

Thought so! I used to be a scout myself,
Then got into the ranging way,
And stick to it ez I make more pelf,
And am free to go or to stay.

Your speakin' of the rain, the wolves,
the fight,
An' the numerous Sioux about,
Puts me in mind of jest sich a night
Some years ago and I was out.

The thunders roared and the lightnin's
flashed,
And the wind blew a hurricano,
The elements rastled and tore and
clashed
Ez if the night had gone insane.

I was ridin' well armed along the range,
Mounted snug on a broncho stanch,
But I felt somew'at narvous and jest a
bit strange,
For I'd lost the trail to the ranch.

The night it was cold and jet black
dark,
The wolves howled along my trail
Like a hundred demons let loose on a
lark,
And I felt jest a trifle pale.

To complicato things, I heard a war-
whoop,
A fierce yell, that echoed and broke
Like the Wild Witch's shriek up on
old North Loup,
And nigh startled me out of my
"yoke."

I sat still and dumb, like a chap that's
 scared,
 And didn't know what to do next,
 And Spry, my broncho, jest squatted
 and reared
 Fer she, too, was scared and perplexed.

A boom o' guns and a white man's
 shout,
 Ez he cheered his pards to fight,
 Aroused me in a jiff to turn about,
 And we plunged back into the night.

The yells and the shootin' kept us in line,
 And we made for it quick ez we could,
 I pulled my revolver and old carbine,
 They were spunky and loaded good.

We landed plunk into a hundred Sioux,
 Bloody varmints, all painted and
 stark;
 Spry jumped and I shot and we made
 our way through,
 Without loosin' a bit of bark.

We came to a halt in a mover's camp,
 And was given a hearty cheer;
 We all j'ined hands and gave the braves
 the cramp,
 So they skuddled and left us clear.

The night and the rain went off with
 the Reds, for
 We had fought till the gray of morn;
 We was mighty glad we had closed the
 war,
 Not feelin' a bit forlorn.

None of us was hurt, but a dozen Sioux
 Had been carried away so lame
 Ez to show clear 'nough 'at they'd got
 their dues,
 And with none but 'emselves to blame.

We was shakin' hands like pard and
 friend,
 When a scream startled us, so wild
 That the hair on our heads just stood
 on end—

'Twas the cry of a little child!

A sneakin' Red had come up on the sly,
 And had captured a little tod,
 And was ridin' swift toward the north-
 ern sky—
 whizzee! how he traveled the sod!

The rest of 'em j'ined him, and off they
 went
 A scuddin' toward Old Camp Meade,
 And't seemed's though the Old Nick
 himself had lent
 'Em especial powers o' speed.

The mother cried that little Marie
 Would be burned to death at the
 stake,
 And the father was as crazy as she,
 And the boys was all in a shake.

I threw off my coat, jumped into the
 yoke,
 And pulled my hatchet from the sack;
 Afore you could wink I was goin' like
 smoke,
 Stoutly settled on Old Spry's back.

And 'fore I knew jest what we was
 about
 We was among them pesky reds,
 And I got the child from the clutch
 of a lout
 And broke in a half dozen heads.

Then Spry sprung about (oh, she knew
 the trick!
 She learnt it while herdin' cows
 For she was trained for the range) and
 right quick
 We left 'em 'thout any farewoll bows.
 The Reds turned for us, but Spry was a
 goer,
 And we led 'em a crazy chase,
 Till after a while they gave us floor,
 For we had the best of the race.

I rode into camp like a knight of old,
 With Beauty hung faint on my arm,
 And I felt like a hero, brave and bold,
 With a heart beatin' strong and warm,

The boys pulled me down soon as I said
 "whoa!"

The mother hugged me tight an' kist
 Me jest as my mother did years ago—
 In the years gone back into mist!

I cried like a child, sir, yes sir, boss,
 When that mother's arm twined my
 neck—

It was as a life-line thrown out across
 The hulk of a foundered wreck.

For I had been tough in my cowboy life,
 Hadn't always stuck to the right;
 Had mixed up a good deal in frontier
 strife,
 Which is seldom exactly white.

And then when the old man came for'ard
 and stood
 Pale and tremblin' and seemin' faint,
 And shook my bad hand as if I was good,
 And blessed me as one would a saint—

Well, I had to surrender right there and
 then!
 Said I: "Kind friends, I'm Cowboy
 Jack;
 Hain't been no account since I can't tell
 when,
 And run with a dare-devil pack.

"I'm known here 'bouts as a mighty
 tough case,
 A bad one, when it comes to fight—
 A fellow what's got a purty hard face
 When looked at by civilized light.

"But if God stays by me and helps in
 the chore,
 I'll swear off, and brace up, right;
 I'll kick my bad habits out of the door,
 And fight 'em with all my might.

"If the mother here, God bless her good
 heart!
 She is surely a Christian true,
 Will give me a lift with a pra'r for a
 start,
 I'll swear to be a man, true-blue."

The mother knelt on the buffalo grass,
 And in accents tender and low,
 Thanked God that the life of her blue-
 eyed lass
 Had been saved, that the cruel blow

Had been warded off. Then she prayed
 for Jack;
 Called me brave, big-hearted and good,
 Asked God in his kindness to take me
 back—
 And she told him she knew he would—

Into the walls of his wondrous fold,
 Into the arms of his great love;
 That my name as a convert be enrolled
 On the big book there above.

This was all I heard, for objects grew
 dim,
 And I seemed to float—float—away—
 In a cold, dizzy dream, to the dark brim
 Of a storm-beaten ocean bay—

To a cottage small on a hillside bare,
 The picture of my boyhood home,
 And I seemed to dwell for a moment
 there,
 In the warmth of mother's room.

Then I felt no more—was like one dead—
 But when I roused from the spell,
 I found myself in a warm, cozy bed,
 Feelin' weaklike, but midlin' well.

My pard, Big Bill, was settin' by my
 side,
 Fannin' me with his old slouch hat,
 And when I "come to" I thought he'd
 a died
 With his laughin, prancin' and that.

"Whist!" said he, "Ye fainted, old boy,
 yer hurt—
 A gash in the back of yer head—
 Wonder it hadn't laid ye in the dirt
 Instid of a snug feather bed.

"The redskins gave ye an ugly slit
 In yer scrap with 'em down the creek,

But as good luck has it yer right here
 yit,
 And'll be all right in a week."

Then he went to the door and called the
 folks
 And capered so he'd clear gone daft,
 Jest started in fer stories and jokes,
 And hollered, and sung and laughed.

And I thought the rest as loony as he,
 When they dashed in, every one,
 And the lass I saved bounced up and
 hugged me,
 And the rest did as she had done.

Yelled Bill: "Old pard, ye lit in the
 right nest
 When ye struck that mover's camp—
 See yer mammy, sister, dad and the
 rest,
 Aint ye tickled, ye wuthless scamp?"

'Twas mother, sure as your alive,
 And sweet little sister, too,
 That was born long after I came to
 strive
 In the land of the savage Sioux.

'Twas dad and the boys that I helped
 that night
 In the fight on the open plain,
 And sister, dear, I saved (bless her sight)
 From the fire stake's horror and pain.

They had come out west in search of
 good times;
 They was purty hard up back there,
 But they'd all been dead as old Pap
 Grimes,
 If't hadn't been for me'n the mare.

The folks settled down here on my old
 ranch,
 And here we all live today,
 Right on the old trail to Camp Com-
 manch',
 Eighty mile from there, so they say.

We're as happy as can be the whole
year through;

Say! it's gettin' nigh about noon,
Better picket your hoss down there in
the slough,

We'll have dinner now purty soon.

There's blood on yer arm, boy! they
winged ye—hey?

Dead sure! only a flesh wound, though;
Come into the house—the woman folks
they

Will doctor you up so-so.

Tonight we're goin' to have a party here,
A weddin' if I may say;

Taint often you scouts fall in with such
cheer,

So you had better stay.

It's goin' to be quite a time, you see,
For Cap'n Joe Tumms, of Fort Knapp,
Is goin' to be j'ined with little Marie—
They say he's a fine young chap.

She met him at Denver a year ago,
And they've been courtin' ever since;
She's the pet of the ranch, and, don't
you know,

Her goin' sort of makes me wince.

She's the sweetest angel under the sky,
And if Joe don't use her as such,
He'll have to tell me the reason why,
I'm free to predict that much.

He was here last fall with Buffalo Bill,
Then again this spring with his troop
To meet General Sherman at Baldwin's
Hill

And escort him down the Loup.

But I was away both times he came;
Hain't even seen his picture, so
Wouldn't know him from any other
game

Passin' as you might say, to and fro.

From hear say he must be about your
size,
And — what's that? Well! you're
Cap'n Tumms!
And here comes Marie on the run! My
eyes!
They're a huggin' like two old chums!

Boating Song

Dipping, dipping, dipping,
As we lightly row,
Gaily through the water lipping
Goes our boat like fairy tripping.

Floating, floating, floating,
Out upon the stream,
Go we, drift we, at our boating,
Half a dozen pleasures noting.

Musing, musing, musing,
Sit we restfully,
While our drowsy boat is cruising
Listlessly without our choosing.

Sighing, sighing, sighing,
Talking carelessly,
Loving looks our words belying,
Cupid blindly o'er us flying.

Dreaming, dreaming, dreaming,
Are sweetheart and I,
While the sunlit skies are beaming,
On our love with joyous seeming.

Old Shep's Welcome

From "Josh's Questions."

Did yew ever in the darkness stop at
the farmyard gate,
Lights a blinkin' in the winders, time
jest a trifle late,
And hear Old Shep come snarlin' tew
the fence and rushin' threw,
Jest tew wag his tail in welcome when
he found taht it was yew?

Puckawatama's Revenge; A Legend of the Wapsie

A party of twenty stalwart Sacs,
 With never a thought of foe's at-
 tacks,
 Went hunting and trapping within
 the bounds
 Of their long accustomed hunting
 grounds,
 In the primal days before the
 whites
 Usurped the red man's ancestral
 rights.
 They left their village amid the
 cheers
 Of gay groups of their warrior peers,
 And happy children that played
 about
 In many a wild, delighted rout;
 Some carried the smile of wife or
 child
 Away in their hearts, others the
 mild,
 Coy glance of a maiden's fond dark
 eyes—
 And they rowed away 'neath sunny
 skies.

On the upper Wapsipnicon
 Their midsummer hunting has be-
 gun;
 Far away from noises of the camp,
 Far away from sound of horse's
 stamp.
 They went to the dark and solemn
 wood
 Where game was less wary, hunting
 good,
 Beside the river where they could
 use
 Their handy and strong dug-out
 canoes.
 The plump brown bear was a splen-
 did prize
 For the hunting Sac's bold enter-
 prise;
 The stately elk and the browsing
 moose,
 The stalking crane and the fat wild
 goose,

Were easy prey to the marksman
 true
 Who was ambitious to dare and do.
 They hunted and slaughtered, day
 by day,
 A toothsome, nourishing array
 Of fowl and venison, and all the
 game
 Known to aboriginal fame.
 In the open day they hung their
 meat
 To dry in the summer sun's fierce
 heat,
 And some they cured with coarse
 rock salt,
 During their famous hunting halt,
 Until with hampers and sacks all
 full
 They began their way down stream
 to pull,
 Merry at heart, toward home with
 vim,
 Passing the long days with chant
 and hymn.
 At night they camped on the grassy
 bank
 'Neath the waving basswoods green
 and dank,
 And dried in the early morn the
 damp
 Of dew from their clothing in their
 camp
 By cheerful fires, and with pleasure
 looked
 On their ample breakfast as it
 cooked.
 Thus three days passed on their
 homeward ride,
 And they camped upon the riverside
 On the evening of the third day
 Under a hill that was just half way
 From their erstwhile campground up
 the stream,
 And they raised their lodge's green
 crossbeam
 Just as the darkness began to creep
 Up the rugged hillside tall and steep.
 They raised the lodge, for the
 weather's face

Wore a scowling, angry, dark grim-
 ace;
 Great, billowy clouds, in wierd un-
 rest,
 Chased across the sky in crazed be-
 hest,
 And lightnings scattered their zigzag
 light
 In wicked glee up and down the
 night;
 The earth beneath seemed to sob
 and moan,
 With once in a while a louder groan,
 And birds and animals seemed to
 feel
 A general dread upon them steal.
 The gray wolf snappingly made reply
 To the prowling panther's savage
 cry;
 Mournfully whistled the whip-poor-
 will,
 The screech-owl's note arose wild
 and shrill,
 The night wind sighed with reluctant
 ease
 Through the dark boughs of the for-
 est trees,
 While e'er and anon with sullen zest
 Deep thunders muttered far down
 the west.
 Soon a tornado in frenzy broke
 Like a creature of madness from
 Nature's yoke;
 The contending elements roared and
 clashed,
 The thunders bellowed, the light-
 nings flashed,
 And the angry winds with clamor
 tore
 The lodge to shreds, and, exultant,
 bore
 Away the treasured provisions
 gained,
 All the camp's effects, and then com-
 plained
 In loud-howling fury down the vale,
 Gradually dying in a wail;
 And then a smothering calm came
 down—

Like a sluggish, dreamless sleep
 came down!
 of strength,
 And the frightened braves, despoiled
 Prone on the ground cast themselves
 at length,
 To sleep away their terror and grief,
 For wildmen's troubles are mostly
 brief.
 It was the last sleep for all but one,
 For from the rise till the set of sun
 The sharp wacry of the fierce Paw-
 nees
 Would echo among the hills and
 trees,
 For a warband from the farther
 plains
 Had sworn to drink from the proud
 Sac's veins
 The blood that made them brave
 and strong
 And ever prompt to avenge a wrong.
 These, skulking in ambush close at
 hand,
 Like hungry wolves watched the lit-
 tle band,
 Till at a command, low-spoken,
 brief,
 From Scowling Bear, their ferocious
 chief,
 Each Pawnee moved forward with
 steps as light
 As the falling dew of the pulseless
 night.
 Slowly, stealthily, as creeps the
 snake,
 With scarce a weed moving in his
 wake,
 Crept each wild warrior up the glen,
 Each of the Pawnees' two hundred
 men;
 And as the stupor of restful sleep
 Held the doomed Sacs within its
 keep,
 A warwhoop around about them
 broke
 That the very echoes of hell awoke
 With dread of its demoniac sound,
 And even shuddered the pulseless
 ground.

In all the disorder of surprise
 The terrified Sacs awoke with cries
 Of inexpressible dread and rage,
 And grasped their weapons and be-
 gan to wage
 War to the death with the surging
 foes
 That like waves of devils fell and
 rose
 Bearing them down with the giant
 weight
 Of superior numbers to their fate;
 Like cats with mice, in this cruel
 raid,
 With their dazed victims, the Paw-
 nees played,
 Permitting them to almost escape,
 Then flaying them until they would
 gape
 With anguish, and in the wretched
 throes
 Of madness would hurl upon their
 foes,
 In the fury of despair, the stones
 From the rough river side, and with
 groans,
 Shrieks and mutterings, would try
 to rush
 Through the jeering Pawnees to the
 brush,
 And in their bewildered, frenzied
 might,
 Felled many a Pawnee in the fight,
 Until in rage the Pawnee chief
 Ordered the Sacs shot, with the be-
 lief
 That in the excitement of the fray
 Some beleaguered Sac would get
 away.
 Then fell the sharp arrows like the
 rain
 Upon unprotected heart and brain,
 And the strong Sac hunters, one by
 one,
 Fell ere the setting of the sun.
 Fiercely they had struggled all the
 day
 Through the cruel torment of the
 fray.
 Did any escape? Was there not one?

Ah, yes! In the Wapsipinicon,
 Good stream, a warrior fell,
 Just as the Pawnees' clamorous yell
 Sang out the death of the hunting
 band

On the Wapsi's rough and bloody
 strand.

He swam to safety amid the rank,
 Tall rushes of the opposite bank,
 And sank to rest on the yielding
 mire,

Nursing the while a warrior's ire.
 There he stayed until the shades of
 night

Lent their still gloom to his home-
 ward flight;

Down the shore he crept with bated
 breath,

While the gaunt wolves on the scene
 of death

Snarled among the stark dead and
 tore

With hungry fangs at the flesh and
 gore.

At length by the lapping waterside
 He saw where a small canoe was
 tied.

A quick thought leaped to his throb-
 bing brain—

In this canoe ere the night should
 wane

He could with extra exerted force
 Be far away on his homeward
 course,

And as he unloosed and stepped into
 The light-tipping, basketlike canoe,
 He heard the warsongs of the Paw-
 nees,

Camped up the river among the
 trees.

Heard! Ah, with venom'd hatred
 heard!

His soul was sick and his eyes were
 blurred

From scenes of massacre and blood
 On the bank of good old Wapsi's
 flood.

He made reply with the fierce war-
 whoop

Of the outraged Sacs, and with a
 swoop
 Of his tomahawk above his head,
 Vowed by the ghosts of the mangled
 dead
 Strewn through his ancestral woods,
 that he
 And his family and tribe should be
 Revenged for the life blood wanton-
 ly spilled
 By the war-fiends—for the brave
 men killed.
 The ripples danced in the pale moon-
 light
 On the storied river, and the night,
 Restful and calm as a summer's
 dream,
 Slumbered upon the whispering
 stream.
 Rapidly coursed the canoe along
 As he plied the paddle fast and
 strong.
 The twinkling eyes of the firmament
 Their countless glittering glances
 lent
 To cheer the brave hunter on his
 way
 To the camp of Puckawatama.
 Puckawatama, the warchief grave,
 Was stalwart, hardy, determined,
 brave,
 A warrior of experience,
 Versed in all the arts of quick de-
 fence,
 And in the strategies of attack—
 Woe to the foeman who crossed his
 track!
 He heard the messenger's story
 through;
 His brow grew dark, and his tribe-
 men knew
 That a dreadful vengeance he would
 shed
 On every Pawnee's craven head;
 The medicine man forthwith he
 called,
 And gave the command to glean and
 scald
 A large supply of the strong smart-
 weed,

And bade his warriors prepare with
 speed
 To give their enemies rightful scath
 Mid the glories of the fierce warpth.
 Five hundred warriors, tried and
 true,
 To the warcall of their leader flew;
 Armed with tomahawk, bow and
 spear,
 Boldly they plunged into the wood-
 land drear,
 And 'neath the forest's sheltering
 arch,
 Though the days were hot, made a
 forced march,
 And reached the camp of the dark
 Pawnees
 On the second day, as the cool
 breeze
 Of the evening began to rise
 O'er the Wapsi's virgin paradise.
 Quietly creeping around the camp
 On the level greensward soft and
 damp,
 The Sacs closed in on their enemies,
 Pounced into their midst with an-
 gry cries,
 And soon had every Pawnee bound,
 Prone and struggling on the ground
 By command of Puckawatama;
 Now would he in sullen vengeance
 slay
 The brutes that had killed his brave
 young men?
 No! such slaughter was beyond his
 ken!
 He could spare their lives and better
 sate
 His utter vengeance and tribal hate.
 The medicine man his smartweed
 drug
 Had brought along in an earthen
 jug.
 This drug was sprayed into the
 Pawnees' eyes,
 Causing them horrible agonies.
 When maddened with pain they were
 set free
 To blindly roam in their misery.

The Sacs to their towns returned
again,
As many as came, five hundred men.
Never again were the Sacs distressed
By Pawnee warbands from the west.

Days of Yore

Down the peaceful happy, shore,
Of the dreaming thoughts of yore,
Through the olden,
Aye, and golden,
Recollections of the past,
To-day my soul is roving—
Roving 'neath the rosy skies,
Of those blissful memories—
Beguiled in transport, moving
Thro' the vaulted, vague and vast
Region of youth's early bower,
Basking in its sun and shower.
Bless the memory of those days,
Bless their warm, recurring rays.

Past and Future

How we cherish the old treasures,
How we dream of the old pleasures
Of the golden happy days long gone;
How we peer into the future—
The grand mirage of the future!—
For the treasures and pleasures com-
ing on.

When Yer Mammy Said "My Boy"

From "Josh's Questions."

Did yew ever unexpected come back
home tew stay a spell,
And tew eat of mother's cookin' and
tew see the folks, and—well,
It sorty teched ye, didn't it, when yer
mammy said, "My boy!"
The tears a kindy shinin' in her eyes
fer very joy?

Bill's Schoolma'am

INTRODUCTION

Bill was a diamond in the rough,
Made of the proper kind of stuff,
But lacked the lustre and the sheen
That in the polished gem is seen.

Absorbed he had been heretofore
With work afield and barnyard
chore;

To plow and sow, to reap and mow,
To plant things and see them grow,
Not only grasses, corn and grain,
But garden truck, and sugar cane,
And every kind of vine and root,
And trees for shade, or looks or
fruit,

To him were life and joy and pride
Above all other things beside.

The care of horses, cattle, swine,
From common grades to breeding
fine,

And rural tasks of every kind,
Day in, day out, engaged his mind;
An occupation noble, good,
And one that builds up hardihood,
And makes man a manlier man,
(Hasdone so since the world began),
But if the worker in the fields
Lacks culture that the schoolroom
yields,

Lacks mingling with his fellow men,
His lonely, plodding toil will then
Leave him without the grace he needs
When lover's cause forsooth he
pleads;

Especially when Cupid's dart
Has hit him squarely in the heart
From eyes refined and smiles that
twine

Round lips of learned maiden fine.
From circumstances when a lad,
Bill's early education had
Been spare indeed, and only such
As gave to him the smallest clutch
On ways polite and gentle speech,
And left them mostly out of reach.
But a new dawn upon him shone,
A morning fair, with rare ozone

Refreshing all the atmosphere,
 And bringing new ambitions near
 To Bill, wide opening his eyes
 To scenes, as 't were, in paradise;
 For see! we here him amply tell
 His married sister, Anabel,
 Who has just arrived by wheel and
 hoof
 For a visit 'neath the old home roof,
 His great love for the good and fair
 School teacher who has been boarding
 there.

BILL'S EULOGY

Sis, the nicest gal on the girth
 Of this great old whirlin' earth,
 Is Miss Van Dyke,
 And I jest feel manly like
 When she's around—
 Feel bound
 To brace up and strike out,
 Be somebody and rustle about!
 Why! though I didn't know the
 work,
 I run for town clerk,
 Jest to please her, and got elected,
 Which was more than I expected.
 Jim Moore
 Was the clerk before,
 And he could write
 Nuff sight
 Better'n me,
 But she
 Helped me with the books,
 So that their their gin'ral looks
 Was improved quite a bit,
 And Jim, he nigh had a fit.

Sis, upon my word,
 She doesn't look stronger than a bird,
 And when she came to teach our
 school,
 One that bucked agin every rule,
 And had teachers round about
 All of 'em purty well scart out,
 Folks allowed
 That the rantankerous crowd
 Of urchins would play
 Havoc with her very first day;

But she didn't have no trouble,
 Though the attendance it was double.
 Y'see, the news had gotten out
 That her certif'cate was first-class,
 And they had come from far about,
 But every lad and lass,
 Even tough young Bud McBrewer,
 First thing sorty took right to her,
 And they're all a learnin' fast,
 Twict as much as in the past.
 Her strength lays in her heart,
 And in the edicatn' art
 She's jest invincible,
 For she know's every principle,
 Got them all into her head
 And knows how youngsters should
 be led.

When she came here to board, I said,
 "Mother, I'll eat out in the shed;
 I'm too rough and humly
 To set at the table with so comely
 A little gal as that—
 I am, or I'll swaller my hat."
 But schoolma'am said she'd go,
 If I kept on actin' so,
 Which was the reason why,
 That, by and by,
 I brushed up slick and good,
 Combed my ha'r as fine's I could,
 And went in and set down to the
 table,
 And did the best that I was able
 To be jest right and proper,
 But I blushed as red as copper,
 While the blood it pricked and ting-
 led in my skelp,
 The which I couldn't help;
 But I soon forgot my fright,
 She was so amiable and perlite,
 And we got acquainted right away,
 Thar, actually, or I'll eat hay.

Friday nights I took her home,
 Down the river road, by Eagle Dome,
 And Monday mornin's brought her
 back,
 With sorrel geldin's, that have paced
 the track,
 And can take buggy or cutter over

the road
 In a three minute clip, with two for
 a load.
 When other company wasn't here,
 We've read and visited under the
 cheer
 Of the hangin' lamp in the settin'
 room,
 Night after night, in the winter time,
 Till the hall clock struck the mid-
 night chime—
 I could stay with her there till the
 day of doom!
 Many's the things I've learnt of her,
 Of people and countries near and fer;
 Many of the stars I know by name,
 And nigh every animal, wild and tame
 And of plants, insects, and microbes,
 too,
 A thousand and one things I never
 knew,
 Till she, bless her heart, came here
 to board;
 But Sis, old pard, I'll jest be floored
 If even she can help me out
 In the awful grammar you know
 about;
 And in manners grand, and ettl-
 quette,
 Things like them, I hain't got 'em
 yet.

Is she purty? Well, I should say!
 Purty as the break of day!
 Why, her hands is jest like lillies,
 and her eyes,
 They are pictures from the skies—
 And them teeth!
 You should see 'em shine beneath
 Her lips, when they're slightly part-
 ed,
 Jest when a smile has started
 On that face that Heaven lent her,
 Face fashioned by some inventor
 'Mong God's angels up above—
 W'y Sis, 'twould make you love
 Every inch of her. 'Mazin' grace!
 But she has the sweetest face
 Ever I see;
 Hear me?

And them little feet of her'n,
 They jest make me yearn
 To hold 'em in my hands,
 They are so cunnin'—
 Joshua! but they are stunnin'!
 Don't see how she stands
 So handy
 On sich dainty bits of candy
 As them feet!
 Is she neat
 Bless you, yes!
 And the bewitchin'est dress
 That ever was, she wore
 Last Sunday; you'd a swore
 That she jest floated like a fay
 In it, 'stead of walkin'; it's a way
 She has that makes her seem
 Like somethin' seen in a dream
 One has had, but don't jest recollect,
 'Cept the lingerin' nice effect.

Job and Moses!
 She jest moves in flounces, lace and
 roses,
 Like they was air and she a spirit—
 I can't describe it nor come near it.

And grit!
 Say I haven't told you yit,
 Bless her soul!
 How she pulled me from the hole
 Down in Wolf Creek pond last winter;
 Sis, I can't begin ter
 Tell in a likely way about it,
 But mustn't 'tempt to pass without it.
 We'd been out fer a skate,
 And 'twas gittin' 'kindy late,
 For the supper bell had rung,
 And our skates jest sung
 As we came around the bend
 Down at the end
 Of Catamount Holler, when zip!
 I made a slip,
 Somehow, and like a chunk
 Came down kerplunk
 Whar the ice was thin,
 And it broke and let us in.
 I tell you it wasn't no joke a goin'
 under,

And the broken ice a punchin'
 And a munchin' and a crunchin'
 In the water, makin' thunder
 Round our ears!

Fears?

I had a thousand, but they was for
 for the girl,
 And when we went down in the
 whirl,

Thinks I

She 'll die

In this awful muss,

But no use to make a fuss,

And when we arose,

Soaked, chokin' and almost froze,

I jest grabbed her to my breast,

And did my level best

To help her out onto safe ice,

Which I did, soon and nice;

But the effort made me sink,

And when agin I heard the clink

Of the ice above my head,

I said, Bill, this time You're dead;

But once more I riz up to the top

And managed thar to stop,

But I couldn't get no hold

On the ice, I was so cold.

I was so numb and weak

That I couldn't hardly speak,

But I managed some how thar

To ask the gal to say a prar,

For she's a prime Christian, if I do
 say,

And a ust to prayin'—every day;

But in the Bible she had read

That faith without works is dead,

And afore I knew what she was
 doin',

'Stid o' screamin' or boohoooin'

As some would've done,

She took a little run,

And yanked a rail from the fence,

And with stiddy common sence,

Hooked the end that had the nail

Firmly onto my coattail,

Braced with her skate heels in the
 ice,

Pulled, and in a trice

I was out,

On my feet,
 Slick and neat,
 Both of us enroute
 For the house,
 Soaked and drippin' from the douse.

Wish I was handsome and a scholar;
 I'd give every dollar
 I've got,
 On the spot,
 If I wan't so rough,
 Mainly,
 And ungainly;
 If I was refined enough
 I could talk to Miss Van Dyke
 Handy like
 'Bout the angels and sich things,
 'Bout fairies and their golden wings,
 'Bout the moon and glowin' sunsets,
 and,
 Silver clouds and mountains grand,
 And flowery dells and shady nooks,
 And all the purty things that poets
 tell of in their books.
 Stid of bein' a bashful dunce,
 I'd go at once,
 And in the eloquentest purty talk,
 Without a balk,
 I'd explain how I feel,
 Bring it woe or bring it weal.

But you and me,
 Y'see,
 Didn't have the chance some has had,
 For when you was a slight miss and
 me a lad,
 You know how father died,
 And how we tried
 To help mother lift the mortgage
 from the farm,
 And keep the younger ones from
 harm,
 And how the mortgage it was paid
 From the money that we made,
 Workin', stayin' home from school,
 But makin' it the rule
 That the little tads must go;
 Now Dick and Joe
 Are both at the varsity
 Makin' up for the scarcity

Of learnin' in the family group,
 And may they never have to stoop,
 But keep a goin' up and up,
 Till they can drink from Learnin's
 highest cup.

I'm proud of them boys!
 They're no toys,
 But strong limbed, stiddy headed,
 big hearted
 Lads, and I'm glad we started
 Them as we did. Mother is so
 proud
 That she has many times allowed
 That father couldn't have done bet-
 ter
 By 'em anyhow,
 Even if he'd lived till now,
 For we've carried out the letter
 Of his wishes as he told 'em fore he
 died.
 Now thar's 'nough for mother and
 plenty to divide,
 And, Sls, I've jest a notion to
 Leave the farm with Uncle Lou,
 Take a little breathin' spell,
 And jump into learnin'—pell mell!
 Sis, tain't too late,
 Is it, at the age of twenty-eight?

Wish Miss Van Dyke could love me,
 But she kindly feels above me,
 Bein' learned and refined—
 Say! Sis, it's an awful grind
 To be ignorant and awkward, and to
 know
 That one's drawbacks they all show
 When one gits into a crowd
 Where the people they are proud
 Of their wealth, fine clothes, their
 handy talk,
 And easy manners, without a balk.
 But I'm bound
 To quit a crawlin' on the ground,
 So to speak,
 And I'm a goin' next week
 Away to school, to study up a little,
 And if I can whittle
 Away at books with good success,
 I guess

I'll study to be a doctor, or a—
 preacher,
 For I'm a goin to reach her,
 I vum! jest as sure as never fail—
 If I have to go through Yale.

THE HAPPY OUTCOME

Somebody in the hammock swung,
 Outside the window, where it hung
 Beneath the maple's dappled shade,
 And every jesture that Bill made
 Was seen by her, and every word
 He spoke, with raptured heart she
 heard.

A noble little women she,
 Who entered in right heartily
 To William's plans to drill his mind,
 And higher fields in life to find,
 But, ah! she was a pilot, too,
 A wiser one than me or you.
 She safely steered him past the
 shoals

Where wrecked have been ten thous-
 and souls
 Who yearned to wear a cleric's
 gown,

Or lead the medics of the town,
 Or be admitted to the bar,
 Or musically pose, a star;
 Professions that are overdone,
 Aspired to by every one,
 Or there about, who strives to climb
 Atop of learned heights sublime.
 A farmer he, already skilled,
 Foundation good on which to build
 An education high and grand,
 Much needed in this granger land.

Why spoil a farmer true and sound,
 Possessing knowledge only found
 In contact with the simple life,
 By crowding him into the strife
 Ignoble that abounds among
 M. D.'s and Clergy, old and young?
 So Miss Van Dyke and Dick and Joe
 Persuaded Bill straightway to go
 To a school of agriculture that

Farmer Jones and the Country Editor

Wife and me—her name is Sarah—
 We live jest out on North Pa-rairie,
 On the purtiest quarter section
 That ever showed a green complexion
 When the skies of June was open
 And the winds of spring was lopin'
 Over medder, glebe and field,
 Propheysin' of the yield
 Soon tew come in plenitude
 Of succulant and gracious food;
 On the purtiest lay of land
 That ever showed a golden stand
 Of grain jest ripe and fit fur cuttin'—
 That farm, sir, it jest takes the mutton.

We lived there fur twenty year,
 It was that or mighty near,
 Afore we paid any 'tention
 That is suitable fur mention
 'Bout takin' of the hum newspaper;
 I say, sir, 'twant the proper caper,
 But many folks dew jest the same,
 Borrowin' papers is their game;
 No boosters, they, by the eternal!
 Them that borrows the local journal—
 I see it now plain as a mountain,
 And it goes without the countin'.

Wife and me we started small,
 We didn't have nothin' at all,
 When we j'ned hands, so we fell tew
 skimpin',
 And got along kindy lame and limpin',
 And kindy got intew the habit
 When we could git a thing tew grab it,
 Until by savin' and by schemin'
 We fetched tewgether a beseemin'
 Comf'table little livin',
 Always gettin', never givin',
 'Cept tew send our boys tew college
 Fur tew brush 'em up in knowledge,
 And our gal, Almeda (bless her heart!),
 She was expensive from the start:
 But that don't count, we must allow,
 Fur they was ours anyhow.

Book Mark

SUMNER BOOSTER JINGLES

By Homer P. Branch

There's pleasure in the air
For summer days are fair
In Sumner,
And maidens' hearts are true,
If their eyes be dark or blue,—
'Tis the place for me and you,
In Sumner.

You will find a busy place
With content on every face,
In Sumner;
Here with welcome you are met,
Here prosperity you get—
You will like it in "our set,"
In Sumner.

You see fairy gardens bloom
And inhale their sweet perfume
In Sumner;
Here the streets are always clean,
Here the folks are never mean,
And ugly women are not seen
In Sumner.

We tender you a health resort,
One of the right kind of sort,
In Sumner;
You get the peachbloom on your cheek,
And sprightly grow from week to week,
We have the spot for which you seek,
In Sumner.

Now, listen, folks! here is, forsooth,
The long, long sought for fount of youth,
In Sumner;
The waters from our deep town well
Make grandpa prance like a gazelle
And grandma look like a village belle,
In Sumner.

Supplement to
"Stories in Rhyme by Uncle Ho."

1912

Book Mark

IOWA BOOSTER JINGLES

By Homer P. Branch

Seek ye the fabled fount of youth?
We have it here, right sure, forsooth,
In Iowa;
Just start the windmill, use the pump,
Drink, and your pulse begins to jump;
Old and lean grow young and plump,
In Iowa.

This is the land of corn and wine!
I tell you what! we're feeling fine
In Iowa;
We raise the bumpest bumper oats,
The sleekest steers, the fattest shoats,
And find it easy to pay notes
In Iowa.

Seek ye the "star of empire," dear?
Seek no farther—it is here,
In Iowa;
Our educators top the stack,
Our politicians lead the pack,
We forge ahead, we have the knack,
In Iowa.

"Where are the fairest of the fair?"
Why do you ask? They're everywhere,
In Iowa;
You have to shut your heart up tight,
Just keep it boxed up day and night,
Or lose it to come fairy wight,
In Iowa.

Would you like to gaze on Paradise?
Then, look around! Just use your eyes,
In Iowa;
Our fields abound with stacks of gold,
Our hillsides gleam with wealth untold,
Gardens of Eden here unfold,
In Iowa.

Supplement to
"Stories in Rhyme by Uncle Ho."
1912

We bought more land from time tew
 time,
 And I was feelin' peert, sublime,
 And one day in divine September
 I thought I'd like tew be a member
 Of the Board of County Dads, sir,
 And thought the office could be had, sir,
 Fur I felt jest a little weighty
 As I'd jest bought another eighty.
 I didn't like the way things run,
 Thought they could be better done,
 Tho't things looked somewhat alarmin'
 Fur poor fellers that was farmin',
 Fur the taxes they was high,
 And the Board didn't seem to try
 Tew reduce 'em much of any.
 Well, I thought I'd be one tew many
 Fur the trickin' county ring,
 So I took a little swing
 Out among the politicians
 Airin' of my new ambitions.
 Without a thought of circumvention
 I 'nounced myself fer the convention,
 And in the paper I expected
 Tew see my good p'int's all reflected
 In a editorial lengthy,
 Praisin' of me full and strengthly;
 But, by gum! it made me mad
 Tew see what that dumb paper had:
 It jest said that "Jones the miser
 He wants tew run fur supervisor."

I jumped intew my one horse wagon,
 And yew bet, there was no laggin'
 On the road. We went a pumpin'
 I kept the old grey mare a jumpin',
 And drove right tew the printer's place,
 Swearin' that I would punch his face.

There set the editor a writin'—
 U-g-m! it jest made me feel like fightin'
 And says I: "Yew rank old carkas,
 Yew scalawag, you bleatin' Barkis,
 What dew yew mean by this here item?
 Yew don't know beans, not when yew
 sight 'em'."

He didn't act as I expected,
 He jest looked cool, calm, and collected,
 And asked me perlately tew be seated,

Jest as if that I had greeted
Him with good day, or howdydew, sir,
Instid of actin' like a bruiser.

But jest then in bounced a happy
Bright young woman, who asked the
chappy

In the sweetest elocution
Fur a little contribution
Fur a poor family in distress;
I thought of five cents, that or less,
But, by Goliah's big brass collar,
That chap he handed out a dollar!
More'n I had gi'n in all my life,
Fact, sir 'twas more'n me and wife
Had both together gi'n the needy,
We had been so tarnal greedy;
I felt as small as new pertaters,
Or little runty green termaters.

Then came my neighbors, Smith and
Johnson

And my nephew, Billy Bronson,
Tew pay up their subscription,
And they most had a conniption
Tellin' how they liked the journal,
Sayin' it was jest supernal,
Full of news, right tew the p'int,
Complete and seldom out of ji'nt.

An old man, kind faced and grey headed,
Whose winsome daughter had jest been
wedded,

Called and thanked that Mister Printer—
Well, sir, fact, sir, I can't begin ter
Tell how nice that old man talked
As around the floor he walked,
Thankin' the scribbler good and fittin'
Fur the fine piece that he had written.

Well, then a man came in with copy
Fur an advertisement big and whoppy,
Said he wanted half a page,
And wanted said space to engage
Fur six months and maybe more
Fur his double-breasted store;
And he said he laid his risin'
In the world tew advertisin'—
Said he couldn't thrive without it,
And that was all there was about it,

Then in rushed a flock of childr'n,
Noisy, jolly and bewild'r'n',
With a big bouquet of roses,
Smellin' it with their little noses,
And after the editor had 'risen
To greet 'em, they told him it was his'n;
He said a kiss must be the pay,
And they run laughin'ly away.

Then he turned tew talk tew me,
But in walked a commit-tee,
Of merchants, bankers, money loaners.
Laborin' fellers and property owners,
Tew git the editor tew agree
Tew dew a little puffin' (free)
'Bout a new factory tew be started.
And he j'ined in with a good hearted
Ready will that was elatin,'
And they went on without abatin',
Talkin' up the shapes and sizes
Of all sorts of enterprises,
And all j'ined in the same conclusion
That advertisin' was no delusion;
That the paper had helped the town,
All around and up and down,
They talked there fur half an hour
'Bout the newspaper and the power
Of good that it was always doin',
Sayin' that utter blank and ruin,
Beyond all hopes fur tew repair,
Would befall if it wan't there.

Next tew come in was a good lookin'
Sweet-faced woman, with a book in
Her hand—it was a Bible—
A little red-bound, thumb-worn Bible!
She opened tew a blank leaf fair,
With childish comments written there.
He read, and tears came in his eyes, sir:
"I love this book, it makes me wiser,
I also love our local paper
May be better," signed "Lilly Draper."
Since writtin' that the child had died,
Had gone over on the other side;
Of the earthly ties now broken,
The editor had spoken
In the warmest hearted words, sir,
That anybody ever heard, sir,
And of her winsome girlhood graces,
And of the love that interlaces
Earthly hearts with those up yonder

Neighbors that we long had slighted,
And many's the wrong that we have
righted.

Folks quit callin' of me a miser,
And now I'm County Supervisor,
And the editor he's our frien' sir,
He is one of the best of men, sir,
When you come to know him well,
Though at his work, goin' pell mell,
Hewin' rightstraight close tew the line,
He is apt to make yew whine
When a big chip of truthful blame
Flies and hits yew where yew're lame.

Like others he may have his failin's,
But don't yew try to give him whailin's;
If yew want to win him over,
Turn him loose into the clover
Of your good and kindly graces
And yew will taste him in the places
Where he is jest as sweet and meller,
Fact, sir, as any other feller.

Kind Words

An angel-serenade
To hearts that are broken
Is the gentle love-raid
Of words kindly spoken.

Then You Know What Life is Worth

From "Josh's Questions."

Did yew ever pass the schewl house
jest as schewl was out, ye know,
Take the schewlma'am in yer buggy,
and then let "Old Fanny" go,
And drive four miles while talkin' tew
the best schewlma'am on earth
'Fore yew druv back tew where she
boarded? Then yew know what life
is worth.

Prairie Flower of the Poncas

On the prairies of the sunset,
By a clear and sparkling river,
By the River of Big Fishes,
Little Sioux, the white men named
it,

Lived the maiden, Prairie Flower,
In the lodge of Beak, her father,
In the old chief, Grey Wolf's village,
Long before the paleface trespassed
On the virgin western prairies.

Eyes that twinkled like the star-
beams,

Tresses black and silken, flowing
Like the drooping wings of angels,
Fingers like the touch of morning
As it lifts the waking eyelids,
Feet that trod the velvet grasses
Like the breathing of a spirit,
Voice as sweet and softly charming
As the birdnotes of the daybreak;
Thus was blessed the good Beak's
daughter,

And her features and her figure
Were so comely that the Poncas
Fondly named her Prairie Flower.
Loved was she by all the people,
Young and old, both male and fe-
male,

Warriors grave and prattling child-
ren,

And she loved the world she lived in,
Loved her kindred and her neigh-
bors,

Loved the broad and pretty prairies,
Loved the wigwams of her village,
Loved the sky that hung above her,
Loved the daylight and the darkness,
All the wild delights she noted,
Pets to her all beasts and birds were;
And the "ha ha" of the river
As it babbled o'er the ripples,
And the note of lonely plover,
Nervous yelping of the gray wolf
Solitary in the distance,
And the night-hawk's plaintive
whistle,

Gutt'ral call of lonesome ground owl

Answered faintly by the echoes,
 And the trebble of the frog notes,
 And their tenor, bass and alto,
 Coming from the sloughs and river,
 Were to her a pleasant chorus,
 Filling every night with music.

Let us look now for a moment
 At the country of the Poncas;
 Let us look upon the beauty
 Of the land of Prairie Flower.
 Broad and rolling was the prairie,
 Green it was in happy June time,
 Smiling 'neath the summer sun-
 beams.

On the mounds and sloping hill-
 sides,
 On the levels and the ridges,
 Roamed antelope and wild horses,
 Roamed the buffalo and roebuck,
 And big deer with spreading ant-
 lers,
 Grazing all the joyous summer.

On the uplands in the morning
 Crowed the strutting prairie roost-
 er,
 Proudly crowed and musically,
 Underneath the bluejoint grasses
 On mounds built by pocket gophers,
 And the hens and younger chickens
 Looked with pride upon his glory.

Roamed the large game o'er the
 prairie,
 Unmolested by the Indians,
 Only when for food they hunted
 For the frigid days of winter,
 As they lived on small game mostly,
 In the hot months of the summer,
 When venison and beef would sour
 If at once they were not eaten;
 And the small game, which was
 plenty,
 Could be taken just as needed.
 Here and there a slough pond nes-
 tled,
 Where the muskrat, coy and simple,
 Built his house of reeds and rushes,
 Shapen like a haycock built it,
 With its base down in the water,

And its rounded top erected
 With a snug nest fixed within it,
 Just a step up from the water.
 Some ponds, larger than the others,
 Had an open space of water
 In the center where the rushes
 Could not grow in the deep water,
 Where the mallard, teal and whistler
 Passed the days in constant swim-
 ming,

Catching frogs, tadpoles and min-
 nows,

Now and then on sweetflag dining;
 And the snipe and plover waded
 In the shallows of these duck ponds
 Where the moss and water grasses
 Made the footing soft and springy.
 Through a bottom wide and level
 In a winding course the river
 Laughed and prattled over rapids;
 Here and there in pools it rested,
 Where a sharp bend, called a pocket,
 Checked the water's onward prog-
 ress,

Or where beaver had cut willows
 From the river's willowed margin
 And dammed up the rushing water,
 So their little ones could paddle
 Without danger from the current.
 In the freshet flow of springtime,
 In the time of the high water,
 Came the muskalunge and catfish,
 Came the buffalo and sturgeon,
 And the bass and pike and redhorse,
 From the great Missouri river,
 From the turbulent Big Muddy,
 Seeking in great schools the shal-
 lows

Of the brooklike upper waters,
 Ere the spawning season opened,
 And were captured in great numbers
 As they struggled up the rapids.

Mink and otter, ducks and wild
 geese,

Game of water, birds of passage,
 Nested there in great profusion,
 So that feathers, meat and peltries
 Of the finer sorts were plenty,
 Making all the Poncas happy.

On the prairie's round abutment,
 Which walled in the river bottom
 With a line abrupt, distinctive,
 Boldly marking upland edges,
 Groves of poplar and of basswood
 Could be seen occasionally,
 Saved by some good freak of nature
 From the yearly prairie fires—
 Camping places goodly sheltered
 From the biting winds of winter
 And the fierce sunrays of summer.
 Like a harmony of nature
 Was the undulating prairie,
 Reaching off to kiss the mirage
 Of the glimmering horizon,
 And the simple, rugged Poncas,
 Without luxuries or riches,
 Without statesmanship or logic,
 Lived in tribal peace and plenty,
 Thankful to the Ghost of Heaven.

All were happy but Big Antlers,
 Gray Wolf's son, pride of the Pon-
 cas.

Antlers loved the Prairie Flower,
 But he awkward was before her,
 Awkward was before all women,
 And he moaned about his passion,
 Had the will but not the courage
 To propose to Prairie Flower,
 Brooding o'er his love in silence.
 Could a woman with such graces
 That the chiefs of other nations
 Came to look upon her beauty,
 Love an awkward man like Antlers?
 Could a girl like Prairie Flower,
 With a voice like unto angels,
 And a tender ear for music,
 And a heart that made a playmate
 Of every helpless little creature,
 Love a rough man like Big Antlers?
 Ah, but no one knows a woman,
 With herself she's not acquainted;
 Long the dainty Prairie Flower
 Had admired awkward Antlers,
 But she neither spoke nor looked it,
 And he daily went despairing,
 Until the Omahas one day
 Appeared near unto the village,
 With a warwhoop and a challenge

That sent the old war blood to
coursing

Through the veins of every Ponca.

Rushed the braves unto their weap-
ons,

Donned their warpaint and their
feathers,

And by brave Big Antlers headed

Were about to meet the foemen,

When Big Antlers, in his war dress,

Felt a slight form clinging to him,

Heard a sweet-toned voice implor-
ing

That he rush not into danger—

'Twas the form of his sweet angel,

'Twas the voice of Prairie Flower.

Proud and happy was Big Antlers,

And with words assuring left her

And led out the Ponca forces;

With strong heart he charged the
foemen

Who had come to cause disturbance

And bring sorrow to his village.

Fled the Omahas before him

He came at them with such ardor,

And the victory completed,

Back came Antlers and his brave
men.

All his awkwardness had left him,

And he made the maiden happy,

And himself made happy also,

On the prairies of the sunset,

By the River of Big Fishes,

By the clear and sparkling river,

Little Sioux, pale faces call it.

When She Sweetly Said "Come in"

From "Josh's Questions."

Did yew ever meet yer sweetheart on
the farmhouse steps, as she

Came out a smilin', anxious like, yet a
little bashfully,

And yew follered, heart a thumpin', as
she sweetly said, "Come in;"

While her mammy spoke a welcome,
and her daddy shuk yer an?

Josh's Old Oaken Sawbuck

How fraught with dear scenes are
 the days of my childhood
 When memory's phantom brings
 them in to view,
 The swim hole and fish pond away
 down in the wildwood,
 Resortin' tew which I ne'er could
 eschew;
 The wide-spreadin' green where we
 pastured Old Brindle,
 Our kind-eye old bossie, whose milk
 was as sweet
 As the thoughts that a fellow's first
 love letters kindle;
 But tew offset said charms was that
 awful old cheat,
 Our old oaken sawbuck, our rickety
 sawbuck,
 Our X Y Z sawbuck, with its loose,
 wabbly feet.

That battle-scarred relic I hailed
 with displeasure
 When grieved tew the heart I was
 called from my play
 Tew contend with the woodpile's
 hard high-corded treasure,
 At morning, at night, in the heat of
 the day,
 Or when in the winter the wild-
 roaring blizzard
 Sawed away at the air in demoniac
 glee,
 Then I got—'tis no dream—just as
 mad as a lizzard,
 And in angry rebellion I wanted tew
 flee
 From that old oaken sawbuck, that
 rickety sawbuck,
 That X Y Z sawbuck, yew bet, yes-
 sir-ree!

I fondly remember when I was a
 youngster
 How I loved tew go down tew the
 old poplar grove
 And visit Dame Nature, dear heart,
 there amongst her

Wild flowers and vines and around
 there to rove
 With chipmunks and squirrels and
 other wee creatures,
 Until I was called tew the woodpile
 again,
 That bane of my childhood's else-
 wise happy features,
 With its sawbuck that filled my
 young life with pain;
 The old oaken sawbuck, the rickety
 sawbuck,
 The X Y Z sawbuck that made me
 complain.

In those boyhood days I used tew
 play marbles,
 Gather in draggon flies and other
 bugs,
 And whistle like skylark that joyous-
 ly warbles
 As its small heart into the heaven it
 lugs;
 I used tew climb trees, and ride the
 grey pony,
 And wade in the streamlet that
 flowed from the spring,
 And clamber the hillsides with Billy,
 my crony,
 Until choretime, which ever was
 sure to bring
 The old oaken sawbuck, the rickety
 sawbuck,
 The X Y Z sawbuck, which was still
 in the ring.

That sawbuck stands out like an aw-
 ful excrescence
 From the frolics and joys of my
 sweet boyhood days,
 For right in the midst of the grand
 efflorescence
 Of memories happy like a griffin it
 stays,
 For whether I played with the boys
 at a neighbors',
 Or with the wee girlics coquetted
 awhile,
 I was called back, O sure, tew my
 onerous labors

With the dull ax and saw on that
 hated woodpile,
 And the old oaken sawbuck, the
 rickety sawbuck,
 The X Y Z sawbuck that filled me
 with guile.

Since those days of old I've toiled
 and I've wandered,
 Been in beautiful places and some
 that were drear,
 Have earned lots of cash and con-
 sid'able of it squandered,
 Dewrin' my tame, uneventful career;
 But whether in woodland or out on
 the prairie,
 Whether up north or in warm south-
 ern clime,
 In the land of the canebrake or the
 buffalo berry,
 In a region of swamps or in lands
 dry as lime,
 The old oaken sawbuck, the rickety
 sawbuck,
 The X Y Z sawbuck, it was there ev-
 ery time.

Yes, dear tew my heart are the days
 of my childhood,
 As they sometimes saunter around
 in tew view,
 With their jam and preserves made
 of fruit from the wildwood—
 And the cookies and doughnuts my
 infancy knew—
 But my! oh my! can't I ever forget
 it?
 The wretched old sawbuck, always
 out of repair,
 Still in fancy appears just where I
 first met it,
 And when in my dreams I have the
 nightmare,
 Old oaken sawbucks, old rickety
 sawbucks,
 Old X Y Z sawbucks, loom up every-
 where!

By Little Wapsie's Stream

They may talk about great mountains,
 capped with eternal snows,
 About fair southern valleys, where the
 sweet magnolia grows,
 Niagara Falls, and Mammoth Cave, or
 rapids, lakes and seas,
 About cold Arctic splendors, or the
 California breeze,
 But give me a day of leisure, and a
 chance to stroll and dream
 In peerless, grand old Iowa, by Little
 Wapsie's Stream.

The world is full of beauty and I've
 often wished to stand
 By Afric's golden river or on India's
 coral strand,
 Or see old France or Italy, or climb the
 Matterhorn,
 Or walk the streets of Bethlehem where
 the Son of Man was born,
 But to travel is denied me—yet I can
 stroll and dream
 'Neath the blue skies of Iowa, by Little
 Wapsie's Stream.

There's nothing quite so pretty as the
 beauty that one sees
 When the blossoms hang in glory on
 the wild crabapple trees,
 Or the goldenrod glows richly from the
 banks along the road,
 Or the cornfields are in tassel, or the
 meadows being mowed,
 Or when startled bob-whites fly up
 from the pathway's sunny gleam,
 In summer-sweetened Iowa, by Little
 Wapsie's Stream.

They may talk about the moonlight on
 the ocean wild and deep,
 Or about the gentle breezes that
 through the pine woods creep,
 But for me the campfire's comfort,
 where the embers, glowing red,
 Now and then send stray sparks upward
 through the oak boughs overhead,
 And the darkness settles round about,

and quiet reigns supreme
Beneath the dappled, moonlit clouds, by
Little Wapsie's Stream.

For me a tent or wigwam on a hot night
in July
Or a "sleep" out in the open, under-
neath the summer sky,
With the hoot-owl scolding sleepily the
saucy whippoorwill,
And a loan wolf, far out, howling, now,
and then, until
Silence comes, and wrapped in thought
I fall asleep and dream
Of shadows, stars, and wildwood sounds
by Little Wapsie's Stream.

For me a story telling group around
the campfire's glow,
With tales of prowess, fairy lore, Indian
fights, and so,
And recollections of the past, and frolics
of the young,
With here and there a pun or joke just
at the right time sprung,
Till time to "turn in," or to sleep in
open air, and dream
The jolly stories o'er again, by Little
Wapsie's Stream.

For me, the chipmunk's caper and the
twitter of the birds,
And the tinkle of the cowbells out
among the pasture herds,
And the rustle of the maple leaves
atremble overhead,
And the murmur of the ripples in the
narrow river bed,
Sunlight dimpling through the elms
like pictures in a dream,
And over all the clear blue sky, by
Little Wapsie's Stream.

For me a picnic in the woods beneath
the grateful shade,
With luncheon, good and ample, spread
out upon the glade,
And, round about, a bunch of romping,
shouting girls and boys,
And lovers passing to and fro, eyes
speaking untold joys,

And elders talking cheerily on every
sort of theme,
In glorious old Iowa, by Little Wapsie's
Stream.

Many a romance has sprung from Little
Wapsie's shade,
Many a stalwart swain has won the
love of winsome maid,
Many a winsome maid has snared the
heart of stalwart swain,
While strolling down the woodland
paths where flowers and wildbirds
reign.
These kindred souls, where'er they be,
O how they fondly dream
Of happy days in Iowa, by Little
Wapsie's Stream.

Did you ever take a plunge bath in the
sand-rimmed swimming hole?
Did you ever wade the shallows, filled
with glee your boyish soul?
Did you ever cast a hook and line for
bullhead or for pike,
From bridge or bank or bar or stump?
Ah, it was something like!
Now wasn't it? Ah, something like!
And don't you sometimes dream
Of those golden days in Iowa, by Little
Wapsie's Stream?

Did you ever gather hickory nuts or
hunt the cotton-tail,
Dig for woodchucks, climb for squirrels,
or scare the timid quail,
Drown out gophers, or get lost, when
but a half grown lad?
Did you explore the underbush, and
scamper free and glad
Along the cowpaths through the woods,
and look and think and dream
Such dreams as boyhood only can, by
Little Wapsie's stream?

Then I envy you your memories, for I
have only seen
The sylvan beauty thereabout, the gold,
the red and green
The groves and pools, the sward, the
banks, through eyes of the adult, —

With less than half the pleasure that to
youthtide would result;
But ne'ertheless, my hearty, I can stroll
down there and dream
A poet's dream in Iowa, by Little
Wapsie's stream.

That's What He Is

I maintain as a rule
Man's a fool;
Always in a stew and fret,
When it's dry he wants it wet,
When it's wet he wants it dry,
Setting up a big ki-yi;
When it's hot he wants it cool,
When it's cool he wants it hot,
Always wanting what it is not;
I maintain as a rule,
Man's a fool.

Picnickin'

O when we are picnickin',
'Tis joy to hear,
The right good cheer
Of knives and forks a klickin'
Mongst pies and cakes and chicken.

Love

Love is a sweet and radiant flower
That holds our senses for many an hour
Enthralled within its bewitching power.

Pickin' Cherries

From "Josh's Questions."

Did yew ever play at forfeits at a party
out of town,
Fire crackin' in the wood stove, outside
snow a comin' down.
And yew paid yer forfeit, blushin',
"pickin' cherries" with a girl
That was so tarnal pretty that she set
yer heart awhirl?

Seek ye the "star of empire," dear?
Seek no farther—it is here.

In Iowa;

Our educators top the stack,
Our politicians lead the pack,
We forge ahead, we have the knack.
In Iowa.
—Uncle Ho.

The Des Moines "Register and Leader" says that Mr. Branch has written more nice things about Iowa than has any other poet about any locality.

This is the land of corn and wine!
I tell you what! we're feeling fine

In Iowa;

We raise the bumpiest bumper oats,
The sleekest steers, the fattest shouts,
And find it easy to pay notes
In Iowa.

—Uncle Ho.

Uncle Ho's 'Entertainment' is Unique

HOMER P. BRANCH is an Iowa country editor who for a quarter of a century has been writing "booster poetry" of great merit for the Hawkeye state. The several papers he has edited have contained thousands of lines of

"UNCLE HO"

HOMER P. BRANCH, *Sumner, Iowa*
Editor and Publisher of "The Sumner Gazette"

*Author of Reflections by Uncle Ho—Awheel and Afoot—Zeyna el Zegal, the Phantom Lady—Plowboys and Village Belles—
The Trembling Skeleton Rocks—The Banished Sachem—Stories in Rhyme—The Sackee Princess, Etc.*



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WHO IS ALSO A
CULTURED DRAMATIC READER
AND
TRAINED ACTOR
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IN THE LECTURE FIELD

WITH a thoroughly prepared program of dramatic readings from his delightful "human interest" stories in rhyme, as well as some superb Indian legends, and choice bits of droll and sentimental verse.

HIS PROGRAM

Just a few bits of miscellaneous verse for an easy start, and then as follows:

Josh's Old Oaken Sawbuck

Bill's Schoolma'am

Cowboy Jack's Story

Puckawatamie's Revenge

Prairie Flower of the Poncas

Farmer Jones and the Country Editor

and more, if he has time. These six make a splendid half dozen. Every one is a complete, fascinating story in verse form, each entirely different from the others, furnishing a variety that opens up new visions of interest continuously from start to finish, making a strong, pleasing, meritorious, resourceful attraction, all "Made in Iowa," and deserving of the most generous Iowa patronage and applause.

You will like this Jolly Story Man who talks to you in Rhyme,
He will keep you interested and a smilin' all the time.

jungles, Mr. Branch has from time to time written rhymed stories of a kind peculiar to himself, and published them in his own paper. These are full of heart-throb, depicting scenes of interesting every day life. Droll, beautiful, pure, strong, intensely human, are the various characters portrayed. No one ever forgets big hearted, brave "Cowboy Jack," or neighborly, droll "Josh," or the experiences of "Farmer Jones," or the sweet and beautiful Indian girl "Prairie Flower," or her brave but awkward lover "Big Antlers," or tragic old "Puckawatamie;" and to know "Bill" and his "little schoolma'am" is to have acquaintances who grow into your friendship and get a grip on your heartstrings like the best of your own kin.

Mr. Branch delivers these stories in a voice that is as musical as the ripple of his rhymes, with the compelling force and thrill of a skilled actor, and the winning manner of a born story teller. Not a dry minute in his program. Time flies. You forget about everything but the people and their doings in the story being told.

Stories

— in —

Rhyme

— by —

“Uncle Ho”

H o m e r P. B r a n c h



A SOUVENIR OF
SUMNER, IOWA

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SOUTHERNERS LIKE "UNCLE HO"

Mr. C. B. Cunningham,
Sec'y Retail Business Men's Assn.
Farmville, Va.

Rustburg, Va., April 25, 1912

Dear Sir:

Hon. Homer P. Branch, of Iowa, the noted poet and essayist, who will be with you tomorrow night, gave us a delightful occasion at School Fair Hall last evening, in dramatic readings from his lyrics and rhymed stories, for the benefit of the School Fair. His verse abounds with human interest, ably composed, and of true poetic spirit. We were especially pleased with his "Bill's Schoolma'am" and "Farmer Jones and the Country Editor." You will find him all that Mr. LaBarrie has promised. "Uncle Ho" is a charming personality, whose return to Rustburg at any time will be greeted with a cordial welcome.

Yours truly,

S. C. GOGGIN,
Clerk Campbell County.

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